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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 13 OCTOBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I am writing upon the instruction of my Government, in its capacity as lead nation of the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET), to inform you of an incident that took place on Sunday, 10 October, in the vicinity of Motaain (Mato Ain), near the border between East and West Timor. The incident involved an exchange of fire between INTERFET and Indonesian forces (TNI and POLRI) and militia elements, and resulted in casualties on the Indonesian side.

The report of the INTERFET troop commander makes clear that the incident took place within the territory of East Timor. Weapons were fired first by TNI/POLRI, and INTERFET forces responded in accordance with their mandate and rules of engagement. Following the exchange of fire, the INTERFET troop commander discussed the incident with the senior TNI officer present, who acknowledged that TNI/POLRI had fired first and that the incident had taken place within East Timor.

A joint investigation by INTERFET and TNI/POLRI into the incident has commenced. The investigation team is scheduled to travel to the incident site on 14 October, and a report is expected to be available around 16 October. We will make this report available to the Security Council at the earliest opportunity.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Penny WENSLEY

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